

THE EMBRYOLOGY OF THE SOUL

of his parents, to that powerful impulse that is common to all polycellular animals and plants, and leads to their nuptial union. But the essential point in this physiological process is not the "embrace," as was formerly supposed, or the amorousness connected therewith; it is simply the introduction of the spermatozoa into the vagina. This is the sole means, in the land-dwelling animals, by which the fertilizing element can reach the released ova (which usually takes place in the uterus in man). In the case of the lower aquatic animals (fishes, mussels, medusæ, etc.) the mature sexual elements on both sides are simply discharged into the water, and their union is let to chance; they have no real copulation, and so they show none of those higher psychic "erotic" functions which play so conspicuous a part in the life of the higher animals. Hence it is, also, that all the lower, non-copulating animals are wanting in those interesting organs which Darwin has called "secondary sexual characters," and which are the outcome of sexual selection: such are the beard of man, the antlers of the stag, the beautiful plumage of the bird of paradise and of so many other birds, together with other distinctions of the male which are absent in the female.

Among the above theses as to the physiology of conception the inheritance of the psychic qualities of the two parents is of particular importance for psychological purposes. It is well known that every child inherits from both his parents peculiarities of character, temperament, talent, acuteness of sense, and strength of will. It is equally well known that even psychic qualities are often (if not always) transmitted from grandparents by heredity—often, in fact, a man resembles his grandparents more than his parents in